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## LESSON LEARNED

### Incident Site Safety: Establishing Security Perimeters

#### SUMMARY

An on-scene command police officer should designate an officer to establish a security perimeter around an incident site that would aid crowd control efforts. This officer should be able to contact the local transportation department in order to request barricades and other perimeter control barriers.

#### DESCRIPTION

On February 23, 2005, the Pierce County, Washington Terrorism Early Warning/Response Taskforce staged Cascade Resolve 05, a multi-agency, full-scale exercise, simulating multiple terrorist events on the Puyallup County Fairgrounds. The exercise simulated three explosions at different areas of the fairgrounds, a hostage situation in an arena building, and a bus hijacking in the fairgrounds parking lot. The exercise provided federal, state, and local agencies with an opportunity to evaluate tactical, managerial, and investigative capabilities when responding to a series of terrorist attacks. Critical objectives included demonstrating effective inter-agency coordination among all response agencies through the deployment of appropriate resources and assets.

The magnitude of the incident and the size of the site made the establishment of an effective security perimeter exceedingly difficult for Incident Command. A lack of resources from participating agencies compounded these challenges. The participating law enforcement agencies were unable to provide an adequate number of on-duty, uniformed personnel. In addition, the participating agencies did not effectively communicate Incident Command's need for more police officers for the security perimeter. Many of the police officers who were available at the scene dedicated their energies to attending to the many victims instead of to securing the site. As a result, Incident Command did not have enough personnel to maintain an effective security perimeter and never fully established a completely sealed outer perimeter to control access to exercise play. Incident Command also was unable to secure the command post, and officials there remained vulnerable to a terrorist attack throughout the exercise.

The after-action report concludes that an on-scene command police officer should designate as soon as possible an officer to establish and manage a security perimeter that would aid crowd control efforts. This officer should be able to contact the local department of transportation to request barricades and other perimeter control barriers.

**CITATION**

Pierce County, Washington, Department of Emergency Management. *Pierce County, Washington Exercise – Cascade Resolve 05: After Action Report and Improvement Plan*. Jun 2005.

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